

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ADVANCED SOVIET AREA/LANGUAGE STUDIES PROGRAM

USIA FOR IEE, IPT

1. SUMMARY: IN ORDER TO PROVIDE MORE EFFECTIVE ADVANCED TRAINING TO LANGUAGE-AREA SPECIALISTS IN SOVIET AFFAIRS, AND PARTICULARLY TO DEVELOP FLUENCY IN CONTEMPORARY IDIOM AND A "FEEL" FOR SOVIET SOCIETY, THE EMBASSY PROPOSES AN FSI ARRANGEMENT WITH IREX TO INCLUDE A SMALL GROUP OF FSO'S AND FSIO'S IN THE GRADUATE STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH THE USSR. END SUMMARY

2. ONE OF THE MORE SIGNIFICANT AND ENCOURAGING RESULTS OF DETENTE HAS BEEN A VAST BROADENING OF THE POSSIBILITIES FOR EMBASSY CONTACTS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS. TRAINING PROGRAMS WHICH SERVED US WELL IN THE PAST ARE NOT NOW PROVIDING AN ADEQUATE DEGREE OF EXPERTISE, PARTICULARLY LINGUISTIC, TO EMBASSY OFFICERS TO ENABLE THEM TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES. UNDER COLD WAR CONDITIONS, PERSONAL CONTACTS WERE SEVERELY LIMITED AND MOST SOVIET OFFICIALS WITH WHOM CONTACT WAS PERMITTED HAD A REASONABLE COMMAND OF ENGLISH. SUBSTANTIVE OFFICERS, THEREFORE, COULD PERFORM EFFECTIVELY WITH A READING AND RELATIVELY RUDIMENTARY SPEAKING KNOWLEDGE OF THE LANGUAGE, DEVELOPING
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LINGUISTIC FLUENCY DURING THEIR TOURS MORE AS A

BYPRODUCT OF THAN A PREREQUISITE TO THEIR OFFICIAL DUTIES. WHAT WAS SUFFICIENT IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, CAN HOBBLE US NOW THAT THE EMBASSY IS NOT ONLY PERMITTED, BUT INDEED REQUIRED, TO DEAL WITH OFFICIALS OF SCORES OF MINISTRIES, INSTITUTES AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS, AND HAS AN OPPORTUNITY UNPARALLELED SINCE WORLD WAR II TO ESTABLISH BROAD CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE SOVIET INTELLIGENTSIA AND OFFICIALDOM.

3. WE BELIEVE IT IS IMPERATIVE TO REVIEW BOTH TRAINING PROGRAMS AND ASSIGNMENT POLICIES TO MAKE SURE THAT EMBASSY MOSCOW CAN BE PROPERLY STAFFED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES THE IMPROVEMENT IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS HAS OPENED. SINCE THE FUTURE OF DETACHMENT "R" -- THE ONE USG FACILITY FOR ADVANCED RUSSIAN TRAINING -- IS IN DOUBT, IT IS ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT TO LOOK FOR ALTERNATIVES. BASED ON INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS, WE BELIEVE THAT THE TIME MAY HAVE COME THAT SOME FORMS OF IN-COUNTRY TRAINING IN SOVIET FACILITIES MAY NOW BE FEASIBLE. SUCH TRAINING, OF COURSE, WOULD OFFER THE BEST POSSIBLE VEHICLE TO DEVELOP BOTH LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE AND INSIGHT INTO SOVIET SOCIETY.

4. OUR INFORMA SOUNDINGS HAVE CONVINCED US THAT THE MOST FEASIBLE ARRANGEMENT TO PROVIDE TRAINING FOR US OFFICIALS IN SOVIET INSTITUTIONS WOULD BE BY THEIR INCLUSION IN THE SUCCESSFUL ONGOING PROGRAM FOR GRADUATE STUDY ADMINISTERED BY THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND EXCHANGES BOARD (IREX). THE SOVIET DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION HAS INDICATED TO US INFORMALLY THAT HIS MINISTRY WOULD NOT OBJECT TO INCLUSION OF USG OFFICIALS IN THIS PROGRAM, SO LONG AS THEIR STUDY PROJECTS ARE ACCEPTABLE. WE THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT FSI EXPLORE WITH IREX THE POSSIBILITY OF INCLUDING FSI-SPONSORED SCHOLARS IN THE PROGRAM, AND THAT, FROM AUTUMN 1976, SELECTED JUNIOR OFFICERS BE ASSIGNED TO AN ACADEMIC YEAR AT A SOVIET UNIVERSITY IN LIEU OF TRAINING AT DETACHMENT "R," OR UNIVERSITY TRAINING IN THE US.

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5. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE IREX JUNIOR SCHOLAR EXCHNGE INVOLVES GRADUATE STUDENTS NORMALLY AT AN ADVANCED LEVEL IN SOME AREA OF SOVIET OR RUSSIAN STUDIES. PARTICIPANTS SPEND A FULL ACADEMIC YEAR DOING RESEARCH IN USSR AND LIVE IN STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS AT UNIVERSITY DORMITORY. THE MAJORITY IS PLACED IN MOSCOW OR LENINGRAD ALTHOUGH A HANDFUL ARE IN SUCH DIVERSE LOCATIONS AS KIEV, TBILISI, YEREVAN OR TASHKENT.

NOMINEES ARE PROPOSED BY IREX TO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, WHICH REVIEWS THE RESEARCH PROGRAMS, AND ON APPROVAL ASSIGNS TO EACH A SOVIET ACADEMIC ADVISOR.

6. WHILE OUR EMPHASIS WOULD BE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL OFFICER ABILITIES RATHER THAN A RESEARCH PRODUCT, THE OFFICER'S STUDY COULD BE CENTERED AROUND A THEME LINKED TO INDIVIDUAL BACKGROUND OR INTEREST. OBVIOUSLY SENSITIVE POLITICAL TOPICS WILL HAVE TO BE RULED OUT, BUT THERE IS OF COURSE CONSIDERABLE SCOPE FOR PROJECTS OF INTEREST AND VALUE IN HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC FIELDS. THE ONLY MAJOR MODIFICATION TO THE IREX FORMAT THAT WE SEE NECESSARY WOULD BE GRANTING DIPLOMATIC STATUS TO USG OFFICIALS AND ASSIGNING THEM FORMALLY TO THE EMBASSY OR CONGEN LENINGRAD. THIS SHOULD CREATE NO PROBLEM WITH THE SOVIETS -- AS LONG AS IT IS UNDERSTOOD FROM OUTSET -- SINCE THEY ALREADY DO THIS IN EFFECT IN US BY ASSIGNING OFFICERS TO SOVIET EMBASSY WASHINGTON AND SMUN FOR PERIODS OF STUDY.

7. WITH THE SELECTION FOR 75/76 IREX PROGRAMS ALREADY ADVANCED, THE 1976/77 ACADEMIC YEAR APPEARS TO BE THE EARLIEST FEASIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO GET THE PROGRAM UNDERWAY. WE SUGGEST AIMING FOR THE INCLUSION OF THREE TO FIVE FSOS AND FSIOs AND WOULD NOTE THAT PROGRAM MAY BE ATTRACTIVE TO OTHER AGENCIES (E.G., COMMERCE AND AGRICULTURE) AS THEY LOOK FORWARD TO REPLACING OFFICERS NOW ON BOARD. SELECTION MUST OF COURSE BE CAREFULLY DONE, WITH 3-3 LANGUAGE A PREREQUISITE, GOOD ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS, AND THOROUGH ADVANCE BRIEFING TO ASSURE THAT THE NATURE OF LIFE UNDER STUDENT CONDITIONS IS FULLY UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE CANDIDATES. WHILE IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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USSR, WE WOULD EXPECT THE OFFICERS TO STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE EMBASSY OR CONSULATE GENERAL.

8. WE URGE THAT FSI AND IREX, IN CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICES INVOLVED, DEVELOP A PROGRAM ON THE LINES DESCRIBED ABOVE SO THAT APPROPRIATE ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE WITH THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES AND RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING OF POTENTIAL NOMINEES CAN BE UNDERTAKEN IN TIMELY FASHION. STOESSEL

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